

WILLIAM BLAKE: Imagination, Inspiration, Illumination
 SPRING QUARTER: 2004 THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE



Meeting Times:

Thursday 6-10 p.m.

Location

Longhouse 1002

Upper Division: 4 quarter hours

Reference #: (30671)

Upper Division: 8 quarter hours (faculty signature required)

Reference #: (30672)

Faculty: Rebecca Chamberlain, Phone ext. 866-2141 e-mail: chambreb@evergreen.edu

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
 And heaven in a Wild Flower,
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
 And Eternity in an hour.*

Description:

What makes Blake one of the most challenging writers in English? Poet, artist, printer, visionary and activist, Blake's genius embraced contradictions and complexities. A controversial figure in his time, Blake emerged as a leading figure from the Romantic Movement and continues to inspire modern artists, writers, philosophers, musicians, poets and readers. Outraged at the conditions created by the Industrial Revolution and Colonial policies, Blake raged against poverty, injustice and environmental degradation. At the same time, he was a deeply spiritual visionary whose mysticism was balanced by his practical work as an engraver. No other English writer has so fully explored the relationships between word, sound, color and image. Through workshops and activities, students will develop their skills as visual artists, poets, writers, performers and critical thinkers as they explore and respond to Blake's visionary imagination.

The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.

Required Texts:

Along with some of Blake's shorter works, we will read *Auguries Of Innocence*, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and *Milton or Jerusalem*. Students taking the class for 8 credits will read both *Milton and Jerusalem* as well as selections from other works. In order to put Blake in context, you will also be expected to read several critical essays on art history and literature. Texts of art history and literary criticism will be on reserve in the library.

1. Grant, John E., and Mary Lynn Johnson, Eds. *Blake's Poetry and Designs: Authoritative Texts, Illuminations in Color and Monochrome, Related Prose, Criticism* (Norton Critical Edition), W.W. Norton & Company: 1980. (ISBN: 0393090833)
2. Raine, Kathleen. *William Blake*, Thames and Hudson, London: 1999. (ISBN 0-500-20107-2)

Optional Texts: (Strongly suggested for students taking 8 credits.)

-Blake, William, *The Complete Illuminated Books*, Thames and Hudson, London: 2000. (ISBN 0-500-28245-5)

He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, flatterer; For Art and Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars. Jerusalem

Expectations:

- Faithful attendance and full participation at meetings, workshops, films, and seminars.
- Reading and writing weekly responses to the texts.
- Maintaining a portfolio and journal of class handouts, notes, papers, research, and cumulative work for the quarter. These will be reviewed at fifth week and final evaluation conferences.
- Successful completion of individual and group projects, presentations, workshops, or assignments on time.

The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but the hours of wisdom no clock can measure.

Course Equivalencies: Students can receive a total of four or eight quarter hours credit for college level work in the following areas: literature, writing, art history.

Improvement makes strait roads; but the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius. Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Assignments:

Four and Eight Credit Options

1. Assigned response papers on each of the readings turned in promptly at the beginning of seminar (1-2 pages, typed). These papers will allow you to: 1) comment upon the readings, lectures, workshops, and films, and 2) summarize, reflect upon, and integrate program topics, themes, and issues. (See handout, Guidelines for reading responses, for details.)
2. You will create a manuscript, inspired by Blake, during in-class workshops. You will have the opportunity to develop your work, outside of class, by using a variety of tools and influences to express your vision. (See handout for details.) You must make one color copy, at the end of the quarter, for a class Portfolio.
3. A recitation or musical performance of a favorite Blake poem (or selection from a longer work). The work does not have to be one assigned in class. (You will give this presentation during week five. There will be no reading response due this week. See handout for details.)
4. You will have the opportunity to work in groups or individually to research and develop a handout that presents some aspect of interpretation and meaning, or literary criticism, based on the themes in at least one work: *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Milton*, *Jerusalem*, or on some aspect of Blake's world view that you find fascinating in these works. You will present your findings in a short five-minute presentation, and complete a write up of your research notes for other members of the class. The idea is to press forward into the work of interpretation by going deeply into a complex work that intrigues you. This is an opportunity to get background material, historic information, and to explore themes, symbols, motifs, or metaphors, and nuances that might not be noticed. In order to help you with this work, we will have a workshop on doing research on Blake. A number of influential works are already on reserve in the Library. This is an opportunity to develop your research skills along with a deeper understanding of Blake. You will have the opportunity to sign up with 5-6 people. You can present your work collectively or individually. During the week you give your presentation, you will not have to do a seminar paper. Instead, you will make 25 copies of your handout for the class. (See handout—Doing Research on Blake-- for detailed guidelines.)
5. A final draft, edited and revised during in-class writing workshops of: 1) a song(s), poem(s), or other creative piece of writing inspired by Blake, OR 2) an academic essay, research paper on Blake's works (3-5 pages). (See handout for details). Students taking the class for eight credits will complete both a creative writing project and a research paper/special project.
6. A final performance or presentation of your poem, song, story, or creative writing, (or research paper) and your manuscript. You will present your work during weeks nine or ten of the quarter.

Eight Credits:

In addition to doing the regular coursework for the four-credit class, students taking the class for eight credits will also:

1. Meet, at mutually agreed upon time, for five additional seminars (every other week). During this time you are expected to discuss *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, along with other materials such as: passages from *The Four Zoas* or *The Book of Job*; influences on Blake, such as Emanuel Swedenborg, Rousseau, or Mary Wollenscroft; Blake scholars such as Northrup Frye, June Singer, or David Erdman; other Romantic Poets; 17th C. writers, reference materials you are using for your research project; or articles that you find intriguing in the Norton Critical addition of Blake.

You will collaborate with your group about which readings you would like to discuss. You will document your work by taking brief notes of 1) each of your readings, and 2) your seminar discussions. Date each entry and keep it in a separate section of your portfolio for review.

2. Meet and develop your creative writing or research paper in at least two workshops outside of class.

3. Research paper or final project: The rest of your work will go into your final project. You must submit a proposal statement for your final project to the instructor by week two, and you must present your final project during weeks nine or ten of the quarter.

You may choose to prepare a research paper (5-7 pages) exploring: Blake scholarship (major scholarship in literature or art history); a synthesis of a particular influence on Blake's work (Isaac Newton, Milton, Biblical tradition, Swedenborg, Wollenscroft, Rousseau, etc.); a discussion of Blake's work in relationship to his life and times (the emergence of the Romantic Movement, The Industrial Revolution, The Age of Reason, Child Labor practices, etc.); or an analysis of Blake's influence on contemporary writers (W.B. Yeats, Alan Ginsberg or others), or some aspect of Blake's work that intrigues you.

Although the project was initially designed to be a research paper, you may do a major piece of art that is inspired by Blake. This could be a high quality etching, a book, a creative audio recording, a short film, or other project that inspires you. (See handouts for more details.)

Knowledge of Ideal Beauty is not to be Acquired. It is Born with us, Innate ideas in Every Man. Born with him: they are truly Himself.
Discourses on Painting

Goals:

1. To experience the challenges of reading, interpreting, understanding, talking, and writing about Blake's works, including: an understanding of Blake's life and historic context, the influences of the Enlightenment and Romantic movement, and various theories of literary and art criticism.
2. To develop a deep understanding of Blake's poetic, mythic, and visual language, including: the interplay between word and image, his short lyric poems and longer prophetic works, and ability to identify ideas, themes, motifs, metaphors, symbols, patterns, images, rhythms, and word-play.
3. To expand your understanding and practice of writing--including poems or lyrics, editing, revision, and various writing techniques.
4. To create a manuscript, inspired by Blake, using the tools and influences of our contemporary world to express your vision. A copy of your work will be compiled in a class portfolio.
5. To work in groups of individually to research, explore, and develop a short handout that presents some aspect of interpretation, meaning, or literary criticism based on the themes in at least one work that intrigues you
6. To practice basic skills and concepts of oral presentation by reciting a section of a poem and by giving a final presentation of your work at the end of the quarter.

7. To transfer the abilities and skills learned in this program to your academic, professional, and personal life.

*Each grain of Sand,
Every Stone on Land,
Each rock & each hill,
Each fountain and rill,
Each herb & each tree,
Mountain, hill, earth & sea,
Cloud, Meteor & Star,
Are Men Seen Afar.*

Class Portfolio

Each student is required to keep a class portfolio throughout the quarter. This will be turned in during the fifth week and at the end of the quarter for evaluation conferences. Include your name and a table of contents. **Record the topic and date of each item** in your portfolio. Each section should be arranged chronologically. The portfolio must be kept in a loose-leaf three ring binder with dividers and should contain the following:

Note: Date and chronologically order each entry.

- 1) Table of contents, course syllabus, covenant, and all class handouts
- 2) Class notes: lectures, speakers, and film notes.
- 3) In-class workshops. (Date each entry)
- 4) Seminar notes
- 5) Research notes for individual or group presentations.
- 6) Reading responses and copies of the assignment for required texts. Follow format on reading response handout. (A section of reading notes is strongly recommended.)
- 7) Writing Workshops: In-class writing workshops and notes (date each entry).
Final drafts, early drafts, and editing workshop notes or your creative writing or research paper.
- 8) Self and Faculty evaluations (Three signed copies on official forms at the end of the quarter.)

Eight Credit Option:

Students taking the class for eight credits must also include a section for:

- 1) Five extra seminars
- 2) Extra Readings
- 3) Final project notes

*I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball:
It will lead you in at heavens gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall*